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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to assess the societal benefits of outdoor recreation and to determine the relationship of social stratification to utilization of outdoor recreation facilities. Conclusions are that many of America's outdoor recreation sites are located at considerable distances from population concentrations and require substantial expense to visit. In the case of lower class families, these sites are located at proportionally greater distances than for the population in general. Consequently, lower class families must spend both proportionally and absolutely greater amounts of their income in order to utilize outdoor recreation opportunities. Furthermore, an examination of the Land and Water Conservation Fund distrubution formula reveals possible inequities in the support of outdoor recreation by middle and lower class Americans. (Author/TL)

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AMERICA'S OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS--PLAYGROUNDS FOR THE AFFLUENT

by

John D. Hunt

A paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of the
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AMERICA'S OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS - PLAYGROUNDS FOR THE AFFLUENT[1]

John D. Hunt[2]

Abstract

One of today's critical problems facing the nation is the need to assess the societal benefits of outdoor recreation. Coupled with this assessment of value is the need to examine the following questions:

- Is the phenomenon of social stratification manifest in outdoor recreation in the United States?
- Is outdoor recreation largely a middle-class opportunity?
- More specifically, is the outdoor recreation opportunity provided by America's national parks and forests unequally distributed among society?
- If the outdoor recreation opportunity is distributed unequally, does this distribution serve to maintain the status quo of social stratification and give those who receive the majority of the opportunity increasing advantage over those who do not?
- Is the Land and Water Conservation Fund, as a source of funding for outdoor recreation, positively functional or dysfunctional to social stratification?

Casual review of America's outdoor recreation opportunity in relation to the questions above strongly suggests that much of the opportunity, and especially that provided by national parks and forests, is restricted

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[1]Prepared for the annual meeting of the Rural Sociological Society, San Francisco, August 28-31, 1969.

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primarily to middle and upper-class families. And, whatever benefits of physical and mental health, education, status, etc. that may be gained from outdoor recreation activity are gained by the middle-classes, while the lower-classes must forego such opportunity and are consequently deprived of the possible benefits.

Much of America's outdoor recreation opportunity is located at considerable distances from population concentrations and requires substantial expense to visit. In the case of lower-class families, this opportunity is located at proportionately greater distances than for the population in general. For the lower-class families to utilize this opportunity requires both proportionately and absolutely greater amounts of their income.

Not only are lower-class families deprived of whatever benefits may accrue from much of the outdoor recreation opportunity, but they seem to be placed at some disadvantage in other societal experiences because of this lack of opportunity. A review of the American education system suggests that outdoor and travel experiences may have some influence on the academic achievement of students.

An examination of the Land and Water Conservation Fund distribution formula and its results suggest possible inequities in the support of outdoor recreation for lower and middle-class Americans. Although such inequities may exist, it is only fair to note that the Fund is probably one of the most outstanding American attempts to put outdoor recreation opportunity where it is probably most needed.

While 50 percent of the states' share of the Fund is distributed on the basis of population and landownership, another 40 percent, which is prorated equally, is hardly sensitive to population locations, landownership, and recreation needs or inequities. Land and Water Conservation Fund distribution could be made solely on the basis of population and landownership.

Although some states would receive a lesser share, the majority of the Fund would go where it is needed most. Of course, such a change is dependent upon whether or not America's leadership believes that outdoor recreation provides public benefits and that lower-class families from crowded cities need these benefits, and are least able to obtain them.

In the case of national parks and forests, the cessation of future land acquisition and new site development, the initiation of a rationing program, and an increase in entrance and user fees with a consequent redistribution of federal funds to more urban- and lower-class-oriented recreation might assure a more equitable distribution of outdoor recreation among all American classes.

AMERICA'S OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS--PLAYGROUNDS FOR THE AFFLUENT[1]

John D. Hunt[2]

> There is a lot of talk in this country about recreation, about parks, about playgrounds, camping sites. If you are rich, if you have got wheels, if you aren't trapped by shanties or slums, maybe then all of that talk means something to you. But to the poor people of America, those programs run by the Interior Department's Bureau of Outdoor Recreation might as well be trips to the moon.
>
> Almost nobody has thought about poor people who cannot escape from their squalid and depressed surroundings to the country or to a national park. These people do like to swim, to cool off from the summer heat, to picnic in a green area.

These remarks, made by the Reverend Ralph Abernathy and other representatives of the Poor People's Campaign on May 1, 1968, to Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, serve to characterize much of the outdoor recreation opportunity in the United States.

Indeed, skiing the slopes of Aspen, exploring the wonders of Yellowstone National Park, stalking a white-tail deer in the Jefferson National Forest, or listening for a sound in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area, "might as well be trips to the moon" for millions of lower-class Americans. Thousands of acres of national parks and forests, state parks, Public Domain land, wildlife reserves, and wilderness areas serve as almost the exclusive domain of middle-class Americans.

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[1]Prepared for the annual meeting of the Rural Sociological Society, San Francisco, California, August 28-31, 1969.

The author wishes to express his deep appreciation to Dr. T. R. Young, Associate Professor of Sociology, Colorado State University, for encouraging a serious examination of the problems of social stratification in the United States.

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The National Park System, encompassing over 27 million acres, administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service as well as the National Forest System of over 186 million acres, controlled by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service are particularly good examples of America's playgrounds for the affluent.

An examination of outdoor recreation in general, and more specifically, national parks and national forests and the various financial supports for their operation, should serve to test the hypothesis that middle-class America derives the majority of benefit, at least cost, from these areas. It should also prove or disprove that, conversely, lower-class Americans receive a minimum outdoor recreation opportunity at a maximum cost.

Before discussing lower and middle-class relationships to outdoor recreation it is important to recognize that class structure and division exists in the United States.

The exact dividing line between the lower and middle classes is not easily recognized. Popularly, income is thought to divide the classes. However, occupation, education, and status are factors that are as important as income in defining class differences.

The Social Security Administration poverty index of $3,100 for annual family income is hardly a realistic dividing line between the lower and middle classes. Incomes of $4,000, $5,000, and $6,000 are well below the estimated 1966 median family income in the United States (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1966). Average family income will probably be in the neighborhood of $8,000 or more in 1969.

Harrington (1962), speaking of Americans in poverty, suggests that, "the poor in America constitute about 25 percent of the total population.

They number somewhere between 40,000,000 and 50,000,000, depending on the criterion of low income that is adopted."

Some sociologists draw the class line using relative occupational status as the criterion of distinction between classes. In 1965, of the more than 72 million employed persons 14 years old and over, 32 million were white-collar workers. These people are generally thought of as being employed in the middle-class occupations. The remainder fell in the lower-class occupations such as operatives, laborers, and service workers (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1966).

Social stratification is a phenomenon which is characteristic of the United States society as well as other societies. It manifests itself in the social, cultural, educational, religious, and economic spheres of the entire country. Some sociologists have argued that stratification is a "functional necessity" to any society for "placing and motivating individuals in the social structure." Thus, stratification, they argue, is inevitable (Davis and Moore, 1945).

The fact that social stratification exists and is intertwined with nearly all institutions in the United States is hardly debatable. However, the "inevitability and positive functionality" of social stratification has come under debate and criticism by some sociologists.

Tumin (1953) suggests that social stratification might be dysfunctional for the continuity of a society. He argues that, among other things, social stratification systems function "to limit the possibility of discovery of the full range of talent available to a society...to set limits upon the possibility of expanding the productive resources of the society...to provide the elite with the political power necessary to procure acceptance and

dominance of an ideology which rationalizes the status quo, whatever it may be, as 'logical,' 'natural,' and 'morally right,'...to encourage hostility, suspicion and distrust among the various segments of society,...to distribute unequally the sense of significant membership in the population, ...to distribute loyalty unequally, and...to distribute the motivation to participate unequally in a population."

Although this brief synopsis of social stratification does not fully explore the many ramifications of the unequal distribution of class, power, and status, it does serve as a base for examining the original objective of this paper. The questions or objectives might be restated as follows:

- Is the phenomenon of social stratification manifest in outdoor recreation in the United States?
- Is outdoor recreation largely a middle-class opportunity?
- More specifically, is the outdoor recreation opportunity provided by America's national parks and forests unequally distributed among society?
- If the outdoor recreation opportunity is distributed unequally, does this distribution serve to maintain the status quo of social stratification and give those who receive the majority of the opportunity increasing advantage over those who do not?
- Is the Land and Water Conservation Fund, as a source of funding for outdoor recreation, positively functional or dysfunctional to social stratification?

THE PARADOX OF SUPPLY

Outdoor recreation acreage is made up of national forests and parks as well as millions of acres of Public Domain land, state parks and forests, county lands, and to a lesser degree, city acreages.

One-eighth of the total land area of the United States is composed of public areas which can be used for outdoor recreation (Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, 1962). In addition, millions of acres of private land are used for recreation. However, as the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission states in its 1962 report to the President and the Congress, "this apparent abundance in many ways fails to provide an adequate supply of outdoor recreation opportunities for the public."

The Commission further states:

> The problem is not one of number of acres but of effective acres--acres of land and water available to the public and usable for specific types of recreation. For reasons of location or management, much of the vast acreage nominally designated for recreation is now not available for general public recreation use. Most of this land is in the mountains of the West and Alaska, while a large percentage of the people are in the East. This kind of imbalance often is duplicated within States. Michigan has a vast recreation resource in public ownership, but most of it is located just beyond the range of mass recreation use for the people of Detroit. The pattern is repeated elsewhere.

An examination of the location of recreation acreage and population in the United States indicates that while 72 percent of the recreation acreage is in the West, only 17 percent of the population is located in this region of the country (Figure 1). If Alaska were included in these figures, the ratio of recreation acreage to population location would be even more extreme.

The relationship of these lands to the location of the lower-class Americans is even more divergent. While the West is the resident of 17 percent of all American families, it is the home of only 13 percent of the poor (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1966). The southeastern United States contains nearly one-half of the American poor families with only 11 percent of the recreation acreage (Figure 1).

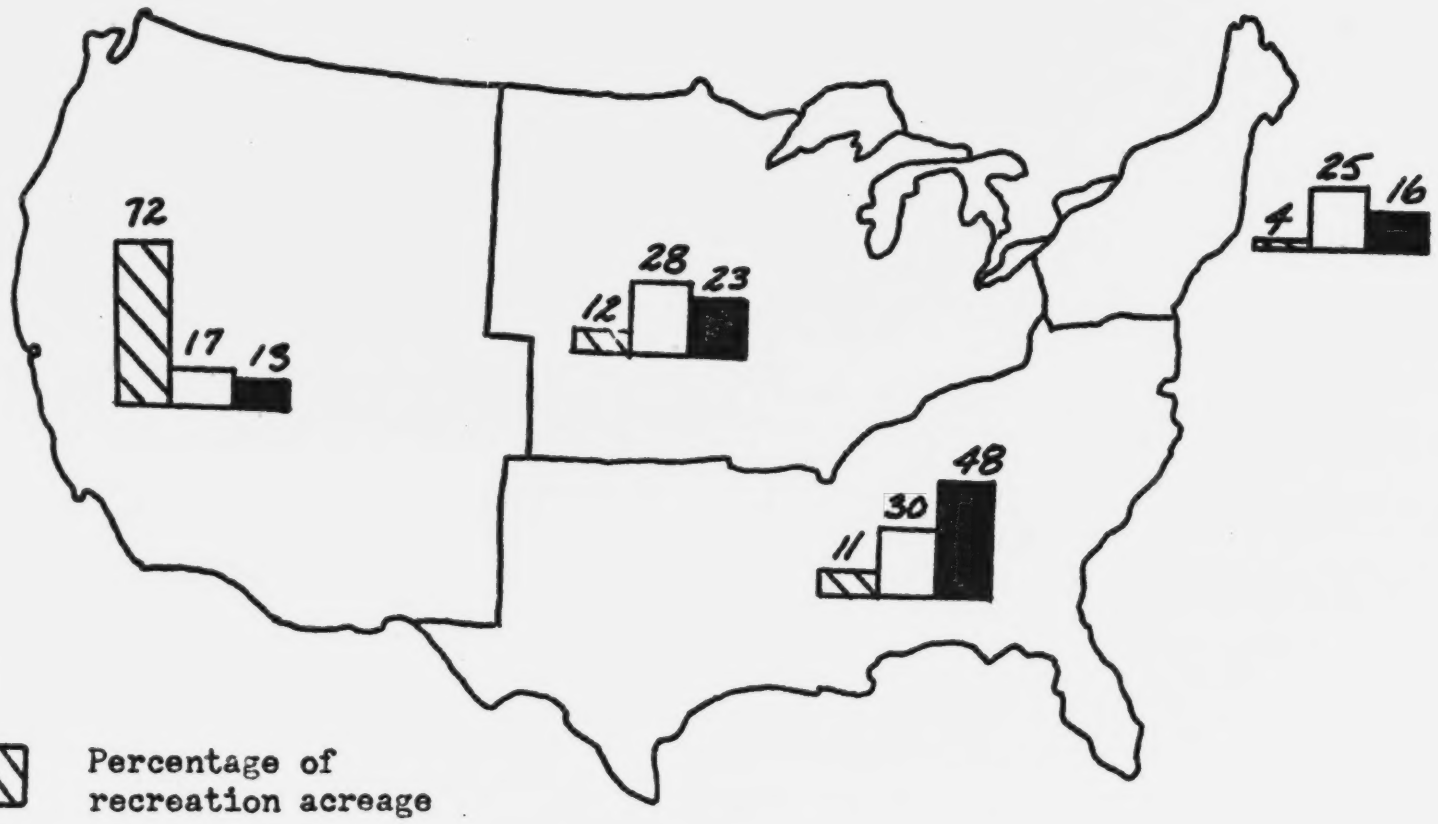
More specifically, an examination of the location of America's national forests and parks indicates that they are situated more predominantly in the West while most of the people are not (Figure 2). Over 78 percent of the national park areas and nearly 84 percent of the national forest areas are located in the West. The Northeast, with 25 percent of the population, has 0.2 percent of the national park areas and 0.9 percent of the national forest areas.

Many would argue that the national park and forest outdoor recreation opportunity is a phenomenon of geography and that it is not the fault of anyone that this situation exists. Nevertheless, the fact still remains that these areas are more available to the middle-class than the lower-class.

OUTDOOR RECREATION AS A FUNCTION OF CLASS OPPORTUNITY

Generally speaking, the participation in outdoor recreation activities increases as income and education increase. Participation in outdoor recreation generally declines with the descendency in the occupational status hierarchy. More specifically, Eva Mueller and Gerald Gurin (1962), in their report to the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, state, "...income has a significant influence of its own on participation in outdoor recreation."

In reporting on the degree of participation by different occupational classes in eleven outdoor recreation activities (outdoor swimming or going to a beach, boating and canoeing, fishing, hunting, skiing and other winter sports, hiking, driving for sightseeing and relaxation, nature or bird walks, picnics, camping, and horseback riding) Mueller and Gurin note a decline in activity scores "as we go down the occupational status hierarchy, from professional to unskilled laborers." Activity scores declined from 75



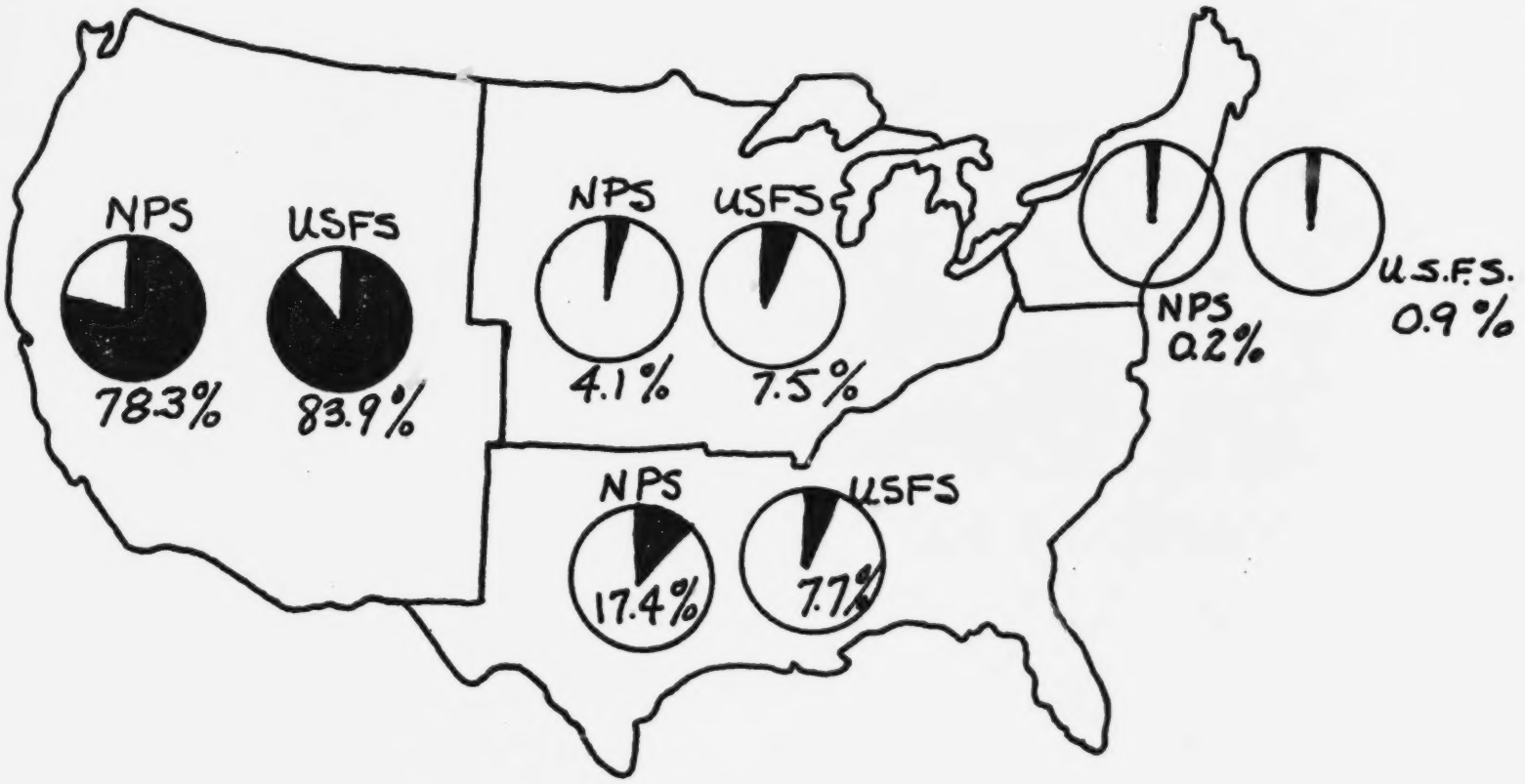
Percentage of recreation acreage

Percentage of population, 1964 (families)

Percentage of poor (families), 1964 based on Social Security Administration poverty index

Figure 1. Regional distribution of population, poor, and recreation acreage.

Source: Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission and U.S. Department of Commerce



NPS -- NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

USFS -- UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE

Figure 2. Regional distribution of national park and national forest designated nonurban outdoor recreation areas. Percent of agency total by census region, 48 contiguous states, 1960.

Source: Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission.

percent in the professional group to 41 percent in the service worker group. They also note a similar relationship with education and outdoor recreation in that higher educated persons had higher participation rates.

Mueller and Gurin also examine general leisure time habits and vacation characteristics among American adults and conclude that, "income and the availability of a paid vacation are by far the most important determinants of outdoor recreation away from home."

Tourists who visit other states and regions substantial distances from their homes are usually characterized by having higher incomes and occupations high on the occupational hierarchy. Brown and Hunt (1968) in reporting on tourists visiting Utah note that, "the percentage of the Nation's population of families and unrelated individuals having an income above $10,000 is only 12.1 percent while the percentage of tourist parties visiting Utah having an income above $10,000 is 46.0 percent." They also observed that professionals; proprietors, managers, and officials; and sales personnel accounted for the majority of the tourist party heads. Professionals were the largest single group accounting for 20.5 percent of all tourist party heads which visited Utah in 1966.

Leslie M. Reid (1963) in a study conducted in 1960 involving over 26,000 visitors to national parks, national forests, Federal reserves, state parks, and county forests suggests that public outdoor recreation benefits seemed to accrue mainly to the upper half of the income strata. He found that 81.7 percent of the visitors to the above mentioned areas had incomes of $5,000 or more. In 1960, median family income was $5,620 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1966). A closer examination of Reid's study indicates that 51.4 percent of the visitors to national forests and 57.6 percent of the visitors to national parks had incomes in excess of $7,000.

Reid also found that 13.2 percent of his sample who visited national parks had incomes in excess of $14,000 while only 3.7 percent of those who visited county parks had incomes which exceeded $14,000.

A general description of the national forest visitor suggests characteristics of affluence:

> Today's visitors are typically in a family group instead of alone or with a group of their own age and sex. Their average age is greater--camping out, especially with trailers and other mobile units, is no longer the prerogative of the young, hardy, and athletic person. Visitors are also relatively affluent, at least to the extent that most family vacations in the National Forests are by choice rather than as a matter of economic necessity.
>
> Today's typical visitor is farther from home. He is a transient with a long cruising radius rather than a local person. He is often on his way to some far-off destination, or else on the way back home (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1965).

Although life styles and interests differ, it would seem that the data on outdoor recreation participation strongly suggest that visiting America's national parks and forests, touring, and participating in most outdoor recreation activities are predominantly middle-class phenomena. Although not all Americans are interested in outdoor recreation activities, it seems that more would participate if the opportunity were economically available.

PAYING THE "BILL" FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

Jack Knetsch (1966) notes that:

> By and large the present supply of free public parks in this country is less adequate in crowded city areas where people are poor than in the suburban and higher income residential areas where the people concerned are more nearly able to pay for their own outdoor recreation. On a state or national basis the discrepancy is even worse--the really poor people do not own private automobiles which are necessary to get to most state parks and to all national parks and national forests, nor can they in most cases afford other travel costs of such visits.

It becomes clear that if the lower-classes are to take advantage of most outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities, they must give up a greater proportion of their income than the middle-classes. Assuming the absolute costs of visiting national parks and forests are relatively the same for all classes (which they are not, since the lower-class is generally located farther from the opportunity than the middle class) then it is reasonable to assume that the cost, as a proportion of disposable income, will increase as income decreases. The costs for the lower-class become even greater when considering that many do not own automobiles or other recreation equipment which make access to, and use of, national parks and forests easier and more convenient. The lower classes do not usually own or have access to equipment necessary to take part in activities such as camping, boating, skiing, hunting, etc., nor are they able to finance the cost of travel and other on-site expenses without foregoing a substantial proportion of their income.

Funds to finance public outdoor recreation on national forests and parks come from various sources. The most recent new source of support has been the Land and Water Conservation Fund, but, in the case of the federal agencies, these funds, which are derived from several sources, can only be used to acquire additional land. Expenditures for such purposes are relatively small in comparison to development, operation, and maintenance costs which are financed by regular appropriations and paid out of the general funds of the Treasury. The federal income tax on personal incomes generates about half of the annual receipts of the federal government.

Traditionally, the federal personal income tax has been considered a progressive tax. That is, as personal income increases, the proportion of the income given up in the form of taxes increases. When considering the

personal income tax there is little question that the middle-income groups contribute more in absolute terms, to support the federal government.

Total federal taxes (and personal federal income taxes for that matter, if the recent outcry by some legislators and the mass media are any indication), however, may not be as progressive as they are usually thought to be, and may in fact be somewhat regressive and a proportionally greater burden to the lower-class than the middle-class. If this argument is true, then it might be said that the lower-class, which is not using the national parks and forests, may be carrying a proportionally heavier burden of support for a minimum of the use.

Seastone and Feather (1966) in reporting on a study conducted in Colorado in 1962 note that:

> The Federal tax structure in Colorado is consistently regressive between the lowest income group and all other groups except the highest. In other words, the 29.4 percent of Total Income paid in Federal taxes by the under $2,000 income class is a higher percentage of Total Income than for any other income group, except for the 32 percent paid by the highest --$15,000 and above--class. The regressivity of the Federal tax structure exists despite the pronounced progressivity of Federal personal income taxes.

The nature of the tax structure and its possible inequities may seem a moot point to argue in reference to outdoor recreation on national parks and forests but if the lower-class does contribute a greater proportion of their income to the total federal tax, or even if the total burden is slightly less, it seems correct to assume that it "costs" them proportionally more for less outdoor recreation opportunity, which they do not use. To that extent, their taxes may be subsidizing the middle-class. Marion Clawson (1964) generally supports this argument when he says:

> ...general taxes used for outdoor recreation are in one sense regressive--they almost surely fall more heavily on the lower income sectors of the population than the latter are able

> to benefit from them. Much is made in many recreation circles about having free parks for the benefit of poor people who cannot afford to pay an entrance fee; this is usually sheer nonsense. The really poor people never get to a national park, rarely get to a state park, and in most cities have vastly less opportunity to enjoy a city park than do people from the higher income neighborhoods. I suggest that in most cities the distribution of "free" public parks is even more skewed to the advantage of the higher income families than is payment of city taxes which helps to provide such parks. Certainly, on a state or national basis the situation is even more extreme. There is nowhere in the field of outdoor recreation a myth with less substance than the one that "free" parks benefit poor people--and I say this in full recognition that outdoor recreation abounds with myths not in accord with reality.

Monetary costs, however, are only one of the many costs that must be considered. Costs or rewards should also be measured in terms of foregoing or receiving honor, status or prestige, praise, acceptance, power, opportunity and so on. Davis and Moore (1945) in discussing the kinds of rewards a society has at its disposal list three major categories:

1. Things that contribute to sustenance and comfort,
2. things that contribute to humor and diversion, and
3. things that contribute to self respect and ego expansion.

It would seem reasonable to assume that if individuals can be dispensed varying degrees of these rewards, that they can also be deprived of the same. Such deprivation could be termed a cost. For example, if outdoor recreation is necessary for a healthy life, the lack of it may be at the expense of physical and mental health.

HEALTH AND PRESTIGE AS A FUNCTION OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

The relationship of physical and mental health to outdoor recreation has generally eluded the researcher. The majority of research has been directed to the benefits or ill-effects of recreation therapy, physical education, and play (Van Der Smissen, 1966; Sessoms, 1966; Buskirk, 1966). Study of the benefits of outdoor recreation has been sadly neglected.

An examination of available literature, while generally reserved and subjective in nature, suggests a positive correlation between outdoor recreation and physical and mental health. It must be stated, however, that little empirical data exist which support or reject this possible correlation. In fact, as suggested by Foss (1966), the benefits assumed to flow from outdoor recreation in terms of mental and physical health may be "based on faith."

A positive correlation between outdoor recreation and mental and physical health remains to be demonstrated. Professional opinion, however, strongly suggests such a correlation exists. And, based upon "faith" or not, if this correlation can be proven, the cost to the lower-class is again high.

Most research on the relationship of social class to physical and mental health indicates that the lower classes suffer more from disorders. Eleanor Leacock (1957), in discussing various social variables and the occurrence of mental disorders, notes numerous studies which "show a consistently increasing incidence as one goes down the socioeconomic scale."

Harrington (1962) in his book, The Other America, about the poor, notes:

> The people who are in this plight are at an enormous physical disadvantage, suffering more from chronic diseases and having less possibility of treatment.
>
> The citizens of the culture of poverty also suffer from more mental and emotional problems than any other group in American society.

If outdoor recreation is a requisite of a "healthy life," it is the lower classes "who cannot escape from their squalid and depressed surroundings" who are further deprived of the "rewards" which contribute to "sustenance and comfort" or "humor and diversion" or "self-respect and ego expansion." Outdoor recreation, in relation to physical and mental health,

may serve further to maintain the status quo and strengthen social stratification.

And, more specifically, if the national parks and forests:

> ...are set apart for the use, observation, health, and pleasure of the people. -- Franklin K. Lane (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1968a)

and if,

> ...the parks contain the highest potentialities of national pride, national contentment, and national health.... -- Stephen T. Mather (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1966b)

and if,

> The American way of life consists of something that goes greatly beyond the mere obtaining of the necessities of existence. If it means anything, it means that America presents to its citizens an opportunity to grow mentally and spiritually, as well as physically. The National Park System and the work of the National Park Service constitutes one of the Federal Government's important contributions to that opportunity. -- Newton B. Drury (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1966b)

and if, as Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson said in her dedicatory remarks for the Redwoods National Park,

> Perhaps the best tribute anyone can offer is to walk away from these forests a little straighter, a little taller, embracing life a little more calmly and joyfully for having seen this place....

then the lower-class, which is most remote from these areas, both geographically and economically, must forego "the highest potentialities of national pride, national contentment, and national health."

The relationship of status and prestige and outdoor recreation is as equally evasive as the correlation of outdoor recreation and health. Little empirical data have been collected to support the commonly held (and possibly inaccurate) notion that status and prestige play some role in the motivation to participate in outdoor recreation. Although reference groups must be considered for placing importance upon outdoor recreation and its correlation with status and prestige, if continually bombarded with messages which

identify what is "good," "logical," or "prestigious," as might be recognized above in the comments on national parks or through a night's television viewing, there may be a motivation to strive for such rewards.

Casual observation and review of some literature suggests that status is associated with outdoor recreation motivation. Tocher (1961) in discussing urbanized motivations and their relation to outdoor recreation says, "the opportunity to play becomes a status symbol for contemporary communities."

Again the question arises as to the relative value of America's National parks and forests as prestigious places to visit or recreate. The same argument put forth earlier, concerning the national parks and forests as the "healthy" opportunities might be recognized here for identifying these places as the "prestigious" opportunities:

> The outdoor recreation opportunities encompassed by the National Forest System are among the greatest natural heritages available for use by the American public. -- Forest Service (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1965)
>
> The national parklands have a major role in providing superlative opportunities for outdoor recreation.... -- Stewart L. Udall (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1966b)
>
> National parks...are the crown jewels, representing the finest and most superlative scenic wonders we can offer. -- Conrad Wirth (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1966b)
>
> Much of the most spectacular scenery in the United States can be viewed in hiking and driving through the National Forests. -- Forest Service (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1965)
>
> What a beautiful and thrilling specimen for America to preserve and hold up to the view of her refined citizens and the world in future ages! A Nation's Park.... - George Catlin (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1966b)

Whatever status or prestige that is to be gained from visiting these "crown jewels" and the "greatest natural heritages" is gained by America's middle-class. The sense of national pride and significant membership in the American population which may be gained through contact with her "great

heritages"--the national parks and forests--is very likely a benefit to the middle-class.

Beyond recognizing that whatever benefits that may be derived from outdoor recreation are derived by the middle-class, it becomes important to examine the mechanisms which are built into the United States social structure which further favor those who have the opportunity, whether it be by virtue of money, education, time, or geographic location, to utilize national parks and forests and other outdoor areas and thus receive an unequal distribution of the rewards.

EDUCATION AS A FUNCTION OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

Many of the mechanisms which exist in the United States society to support social stratification and maintain the status quo of the middle-class are subtle. Since they are often built upon what is defined as "logical," "natural," or "morally right," the middle-class, although professing equality for all, is ignorant, naive, or chooses to ignore the fact that these mechanisms work to support their position while excluding the lower-class.

Although it is commonly held that income differences are narrowing and that the United States society is open, thus encouraging occupational and social mobility, there is reason to suspect that the opposite is true.

Miller (1964) in examining the social revolution" explains, "A myth has been created in the United States that incomes are gradually becoming more evenly distributed." After a thorough examination of the 1960 U.S. Census of Population data, Miller concludes that:

> The narrowing of the income gap between the skilled and the unskilled, the high-paid and the low-paid workers, which was evident up to and including the war years, has stopped during the past decade and the trend seems to be moving in the opposite direction.

Goldthorpe (1964) studied differentiation, consistency, and mobility in industrial societies. In speaking of the United States, he admits that, "the middle ranks of the income distribution may be swelling, the gap between the bottom and the higher levels is, if anything, tending to widen." In reference to mobility in advanced societies, Goldthorpe suggests, "for that large proportion of the population at least, with rank-and-file jobs and 'ordinary' educational qualifications, industrial society appears to be growing significantly less 'open' than it once was."

If these characteristics are true, the question arises about what middle-class values or mechanisms relating to national parks and forests, or outdoor recreation in general, help to contribute to these unequal distribution of rewards.

Probably the most subtle mechanisms or habits exist in the United States' educational system.

"Show and Tell" time, introduced in the very early years of school, is designed to create a degree of sharing or "citizenship" in those who have something to "show or tell" and to broaden the experience of those with whom the items or experiences are shared. Although no research has examined the differences in status, praise, grading, or rewards bestowed upon a child for the items or experiences that are shared, it seems reasonable to suggest that difference, newness, or uniqueness may be greeted with considerable attention from the teacher and fellow students.

Undoubtedly, outdoor recreation, travel, and visits to national parks and forests provide students with many items and experiences to "show and tell." Foreign currency, a pine cone, a rock, a trip to the Grand Canyon, a plane ride, a snake, postcards, Dad's colored slides, and a multitude of other items and experiences associated with outdoor recreation may reap rewards far superior to those given the lower-class child who has not left home or has a doll like everyone else, only more worn and tattered.

As the educational process progresses and the student is introduced to subjects beyond the three-R's, an association with his environment begins to play an increasingly important role.

It is generally held that comprehension and understanding of subjects like geology, geography, botany, zoology, history, etc. are improved by field, laboratory work or actual experience with examples in context with their environment.

Julian Smith (1962) explains that, "in the school curriculum, through subject matter courses and disciplines, there are many learning activities that have potential for creating interests in outdoor recreation pursuits and therefore have implications for the use of outdoor recreation resources." He discusses the relevance of social studies, science, and arts and literature to encouraging travel and other outdoor recreation activities. If there is a correlation or stimulation, it seems that the converse would hold; that participation in outdoor recreation, travel, and visits to national parks and forests would influence the degree of success, motivation, or interest in social science, science, and arts and literature.

Again, participation in outdoor recreation may give added advantage to the middle-class children for achievement in the subject matter courses which have been defined as "logical," "natural," or "morally right" such as social studies, science, and arts and literature. It seems very unlikely that teachers will phrase questions about lower-class experiences, slums or poverty, or praise extensive knowledge of them.

In the later years of the secondary education program, counseling plays a role in directing young people into their appropriate occupational "slot." Through a battery of testing mechanisms, the counselor gathers data pertinent to a student's occupational interest. Most counselors would admit that the results of vocational and occupational interest tests

are not sacred and are subject to error correlated with the student's experiences. The student's lack of experience with some subject may curtail his ability to express a true interest or opinion about these matters. Out of ignorance or the fear of admitting such ignorance, the results of an occupational interest test may be quite inappropriate for the student. The results may be used to direct a student toward a profession or vocation for which he is unsuited. An examination of three occupational interest tests--Kuder Preference Record, Vocational, Form CM; Kuder Occupational Interest Survey, DD; and Strong Vocational Interest Blank for Men--clearly identifies the role of outdoor recreation and travel experience in identifying occupational interest.

In the Strong Vocational Interest Blank for Men a student is asked to record his feelings of like, indifference, or dislike toward various occupations, school subjects, amusements, activities, and types of people. Although there are nearly 400 items for which an expression may be given, approximately 10 percent require some knowledge of outdoor recreation experiences.

As mentioned previously, some expressions may reflect a lack of experience or knowledge rather than an occupational interest. The possibility then exists that since outdoor recreation experience or knowledge is an element of consideration, lower-class students, lacking this experience or the opportunity to gain it, will receive less significant or meaningful vocational or occupational guidance. This may help to perpetuate lower-class members in the lower-class jobs. Such mechanisms help to assure that the middle-class student will potentially receive guidance more representative of his interests.

The Kuder tests, when compared with the Strong test, have less reference to outdoor recreation related experiences. However, the student is

asked to compare and give an expression of which he would like to do "most" or "least" for such things as: "Visit a national park famous for its mountain scenery; Take special notice of the scenery when you are traveling; Go fishing; Collect pieces of different kinds of wood; Visit a former battlefield; Take special notice of the crops when you are traveling; Pick out the trees to be cut down in forests; Stay at a fashionable resort; Go on a camping trip; Take a trip over back country roads; Design camp equipment; or Climb mountains (Science Research Associates, Inc. 1948 and 1964)." Statements like these are found throughout the Kuder tests.

Still another example of how those who have recreation opportunity may receive advantage over those who do not, may be found in occupational employment procedures. A casual review of job applications indicates that applicant recreational and leisure time habits are often considered.

The very nature of many jobs, especially those in the upper portion of the occupational status hierarchy, exclude the lower-class because of education and experience requirements. However, it is not too difficult to imagine that when the educational and work experience qualifications of various applicants are similar that those having "accepted" leisure time habits or recreational experiences, among other things, will be given preferential treatment. Although outdoor recreation experiences are certainly not the only type of "good" or "accepted" leisure it is questionable as to how some lower-class activities, which may not be considered "natural," "logical," or "morally right" by middle-class standards, would be weighed when considering a job applicant's qualifications.

Although there are probably other phenomena in the realm of education, employment, and everyday living for which outdoor recreation may serve to assist in the unequal distribution of rewards, the above comments are examples of how outdoor recreation may serve to maintain the <u>status quo</u> of social

stratification and give those who receive the majority of the opportunity increasing advantage over those who do not.

SERVING THE STATUS QUO THROUGH THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

In recent years concern has been voiced by some over the possible unequal distribution of outdoor recreation opportunity and the need to locate opportunities closer to America's urban population. Empirically proven or not, the national outdoor recreation policy strongly suggests that outdoor recreation is an important ingredient for the health and welfare of the United States. The inactment of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act on January 1, 1965, gave obvious testimony to this national policy. It provided the United States with its first continuous source of funds "from which appropriations will be made to provide outdoor recreation areas and facilities at State, local, and Federal levels (Public Law 88-578)."

Sources of funds are derived from:

> (1) nominal admission and user fees at Federal recreation areas designated by the President...., (2) net proceeds from the sale of Federal surplus real property, and (3) existing Federal taxes on motorboat fuels (Public Law 88-578).

Legislation was approved by the 90th Congress to increase the level of the Fund in the fiscal years from 1969 to 1973 by either appropriations from the general Treasury revenues or from Outer Continental Shelf mineral leasing receipts (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1968b).

Generally speaking:

> ....60 percent of the annual appropriation from the Fund is available to the States on a 50-50 matching basis for planning, acquisition, and development of land and water areas for public outdoor recreation purposes....(Public Law 88-578).

The states may distribute the funds to their political subdivisions; and

> The remaining portion of the Fund--normally 40 percent --will be available to certain Federal Agencies for acquisition of certain needed recreation areas, and for payment into miscellaneous receipts of the Treasury to help offset capital costs of Federal water development projects which are allocated to public recreation and fish and wildlife enhancement (Public Law 88-578).

Although the Land and Water Conservation Fund has aided in the redistribution of "benefits" of outdoor recreation, it continues to support middle-class opportunity disproportionate to lower-class needs.

From 1965 through fiscal year 1969, $174,293,500 has been appropriated to the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service (Kelvie, 1968). Although restrictions of the Fund assure that the majority of these monies must be expended east of the 100th meridian and thus closer to the population concentrations, the fact still remains that the very nature of the two agencies almost assures that the land acquisitions will be rural or wild lands.

A report of the first year-and-a-half of the Fund indicated that 26 percent and 4 percent of the approved land acquisition for the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service respectively, was over 2½ hours driving time from a "center of nearest urbanized area (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1966c)." The remaining land was located under 2½ hours driving time from these centers. This certainly seems to be an improvement over past federal land acquisitions; however, these lands may still be located too far from lower-class urban populations.

The fact that any "driving time" at all is required to visit these areas, restricts many lower-class families from use. It seems worth repeating Jack Knetsch's (1966) comment concerning supply of public outdoor recreation areas that, "on a state or national basis the discrepancy is even

worse--the really poor people do not own private automobiles which are necessary to get to most state parks and to all national parks and national forests, nor can they in most cases afford other travel costs of such visits."

The major state appropriation from 1965 to 1969 of $270,455,000 has gone to those states with the greatest population and lowest Federal land ownership. However, the formula used to distribute these funds among the states does not allow for total distribution on the basis of population and Federal land ownership. Forty percent is prorated equally, thus assuring all states a share, but disregarding population concentrations and land ownership patterns. Nevada, therefore, which is fourth from the bottom in population with 0.4 million citizens and 87.1 percent Federal land ownership, receives a share equal to New York, second only to California in population, with 18.1 million citizens and 0.7 percent Federal land ownership (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1966).

Another 5 percent of the Fund is distributed on the basis of out-of-state visitor use. The greater the tourist or out-of-state visitation, the greater a state's share of this 5 percent. As was mentioned earlier, tourists are generally in the higher income brackets. A state which attracts these middle-class users is favored with a greater portion of the funds.

Although in recent years the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, which administers the Fund, has put increasing pressure on the states to orient their acquisition and development programs to urban needs, a review of the first year-and-a-half of the program suggests that such an orientation was not the case. For state and local funded projects, 87 percent of the acquisition and 65 percent of the development was non-urban. Only 28 percent of the acquisition and 31 percent of the development programs were under one hour's "driving time from center of nearest urbanized area (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1966c)."

While distribution of the Fund does give consideration to lower-class needs (assuming lower-class recreation needs are the same as those offered from the types of activities the Fund has generally supported) the middle-class opportunity is still supported with large sums of money. Complete overhaul of the Fund could afford a more flexible system which would assure more sensitive reaction to outdoor recreation and leisure activity needs of all classes.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Phillip O. Foss (1966) in addressing the National Conference on Policy Issues in Outdoor Recreation, poses serious questions about America's outdoor recreation opportunities and the poor:

> If outdoor recreation can provide real public benefits, presumably the poor are in greatest need of the benefits and least able to purchase them in the market. Should public support of outdoor recreation be mainly directed toward the lower half (rather than the upper half) of the income scale? If low income groups are to receive special attention, what kinds of programs should be developed for their benefit? At what level of quality?
>
> Should western playgrounds be reserved for lower income people and should their transportation and subsistence be paid while attending? If we are serious about the public values of outdoor recreation and if we agree that lower income people from crowded cities need such benefits most and are least able to supply them for themselves--why not? It might be cheaper to purchase property in, or near, major urban centers. Does this mean a lower quality recreation for lower income people? If it does, are we retreating in our beliefs that outdoor recreation provides real benefits and that these benefits are most needed and least available to lower income people?

Such important questions as these must be answered. It is questionable that they are given much consideration by many outdoor recreation decision-makers presently.

Of paramount importance, and one of the first steps to answering these questions, is a nation-wide, coordinated research program. However, the

program cannot provide answers to these problems if it continues to measure only expenditures, number of users, facility numbers, and so on. A program must be developed which gathers together the highly fragmented and often unrelated research of state and federal agencies, private industry, and the universities. Such a program must direct these efforts on a common course. Research must examine the true benefits of leisure and above all, it must examine all leisure. It must redefine what constitutes leisure. It must offer both the middle and lower classes, all alternatives for recreation development including those dictated by their own life styles. In the case of the lower-class, such opportunity must be a reflection of their desires and needs, rather than those of the middle-class.

Probably the greatest need in outdoor recreation is an adaptive system which will be susceptible to the needs and desires of the <u>whole</u> United States population. To develop such a system will involve a complete redefinition of what constitutes "good" leisure pursuits. In the final analysis, if outdoor recreation is "good" and America's national parks and forests are the "crown jewels" containing the "superlative" opportunities, then programs must be developed which truly afford equal opportunity for all to reap these rewards or benefits. If the benefits from outdoor recreation continue to be distributed unequally and changes are not made, then outdoor recreation and national park and forest recreation resources will not contribute to the total well-being of the country. They will serve only to maintain the <u>status quo</u> and to add fuel to the fire of poverty, racial strife and unrest, and general population turmoil.

More immediate changes can be made. Such changes, or even suggestions, would undoubtedly be met with outrage and bitter controversy. Again, it is a question of the "true" benefits and "real" needs of outdoor recreation.

The following changes could be made in the national park and forest programs under conditions that now exist. Both intellectual and monetary savings could be redirected to more evenly distribute the recreation opportunity. As general changes are made in the total outdoor recreation picture, such changes as mentioned below may be less appropriate. However, the real key to these changes is that a system should be developed which will afford continual change. The following recommendations are offered to stimulate discussion and intellectual dialogue:

- Curtail land acquisition in existing national forest and national parks.
- Curtail the selection and establishment of new national parks.
- Curtail new outdoor recreation site development on national parks and forests such as campgrounds, boat areas, trail development, visitor centers, and so forth.

Of course, the success of these first three recommendations is solely dependent upon the assurance that whatever federal funds are not utilized for land acquisition and development are appropriated to leisure activity development in and near America's lower-class population concentrations.

- Initiate a program of rationing national park and forest outdoor recreation opportunity.

Rationing is not new. Many state fish and game departments have had to ration hunting and fishing opportunities for many years. In recent years, Federal and state recreation specialists have suggested rationing as a means to reduce impact on outdoor recreation areas. The Advisory Board on Wildlife Management (Blue Ribbon Committee on National Park Management) (1963), appointed by former Secretary of the Interior Udall says, "If too many tourists crowd the roadways, then we should ration the tourists

rather than expand the roadways." Tocher, et al. (1965) recognize that, "there will always be need for some kinds of recreation that are freely available, but it might be necessary to ration other kinds of recreation in order to maintain a broad range of opportunities." Such rationing would not only reduce impact but it would also reduce the need to continually provide more facilities.

- Provide appropriations to national forests and parks only adequate to maintain existing development and programs.
- Increase entrance and user fees.

Although there is discussion of dropping the present system of uniform fees and the blanket fee of $7 that provides admission to any Federal area as often as one pleases during the year without payment of additional fees, because of the administrative costs and its regressivity to the lower-income groups, it might be argued that an increase in the fee would provide greater benefits. A change in the fee structure including an increase in fees might offset the administrative costs and yield a net return to the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Although such an increase would restrict use by the lower income groups, it has already been suggested that they are not now using these areas. It is other costs which serve as major restraints, not entrance fees. Knetsch (1966) argues that, "An entrance fee as little as a dime would raise a barrier to the use of many city parks, at least to some people. For most other areas this argument is less cogent." In discussing these other areas he says, "Because the added entrance charge would normally be such a small percent of the total cost of visiting such areas, which might include the national parks, relatively large percentage increases in fee would probably have little effect on attendance."

Such an increase in admission fees to federal areas would also encourage more private development, thus adding to the outdoor recreation opportunity. This opportunity might serve to absorb many of the participants restricted from national parks and forests due to imposition of rationing.

Finally, the following changes might be made in the administration of the Land and Water Conservation Fund:

- Eliminate all land acquisition appropriations to the federal agencies.
- Provide a portion of the maintenance and operation appropriation to the national parks and forests for existing developments.
- Distribute the remainder, and majority of the Fund, to the states on a formula based entirely on population and Federal land ownership.

The formula factors now used, which relate to population and federal land ownership, are probably adequate. This suggested change would mean the elimination of distribution on the basis of a prorated equal share and out-of-state visitor use. Although some states would receive a lesser share, the majority of the Fund would go where it is needed most. Of course, such a change is dependent upon whether or not America's leadership believes that outdoor recreation provides public benefits and that lower-class families from crowded cities need these benefits, and are least able to obtain them.

The time has come for America's outdoor recreation decision-makers to honestly assess the recreation needs of this country. It seems likely that without a reorientation of present philosophies and programs, outdoor recreation and America's national parks and forests will not contribute to solving the major problems of this country and will serve only to maintain

the status quo. And there is little doubt that several Americans will feel the actual crust of the moon under their feet before millions of others will have the opportunity to step foot in a national park or forest.

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